



[Home](#) > [Methodologies](#) > [Work-Related Training and Adult Learning methodology](#) > [2024-25 financial year](#)
> [Work-Related Training and Adult Learning methodology, 2024-25 financial year](#)

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Work-Related Training and Adult Learning methodology

Reference period 2024-25 financial year

Released 9/04/2026

On this page

- [Overview](#)
- [Data collection](#)
- [Processing the data](#)
- [Comparing the data](#)
- [Data release](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Abbreviations](#)

Overview

Scope

People aged 15–74 years who were usual residents of private dwellings.

Excludes:

- Australian permanent defence force members and their dependants
- non-Australian defence forces
- residents in very remote Australia and the Indigenous Community Strata.

Geography

Data available for:

- Australia
- States and territories
- Major cities
- Inner regional
- Outer regional/remote.

Source

Multipurpose Household Survey

Collection method

Interviews were conducted by telephone with responses directly recorded in an electronic questionnaire.

Proxy interviews were permissible under certain circumstances.

Concepts, sources and methods

Education data are coded to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001](#).

History of changes

From 2024–25, persons resident in very remote areas of Australia were excluded from the survey.

Data collection

Overview

This publication contains results from the survey of Work-Related Training and Adult Learning (WRTAL), a topic on the Multipurpose Household Survey (MPHS) conducted throughout Australia from July 2024 to June 2025. The MPHS, undertaken each financial year by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), is a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) and is designed to collect statistics for a number of small, self-contained topics.

The WRTAL survey collected information from people about their participation in formal study and work-related training in the 12 months prior to their interview, including their reasons for participation, the time spent, personal costs incurred, and any barriers to participation. Information on labour force characteristics, education, income and other demographics was also collected.

The WRTAL survey was previously conducted as a supplement to the monthly LFS in April 2013 and as a topic on the MPHS in 2016–17 and 2020–21. Further details are outlined below in the [Comparing the data \(/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25#comparing-the-data\)](#) section.

Scope

The scope of the WRTAL survey was restricted to persons aged 15–74 years who were usual residents of private dwellings and excludes:

- members of the Australian permanent defence forces
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from Census and estimated resident population counts
- overseas residents in Australia
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants)
- persons living in non-private dwellings such as hotels, university residences, boarding schools, hospitals, nursing homes, homes for people with disabilities, and prisons
- persons resident in very remote areas of Australia
- persons resident in the Indigenous Community Strata (ICS).

The scope for the MPHS included households residing in urban, rural and remote parts of Australia, except the ICS.

As part of ongoing improvements to the estimation method for Labour Force statistics, during 2023–24, the ABS implemented some minor changes in how it accounts for some relatively small population groups within the sample. Refer to [Revisions from improvements to Labour Force estimation method \(https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/revisions-improvements-labour-force-estimation-method\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/revisions-improvements-labour-force-estimation-method).

Coverage

In the LFS, rules are applied which aim to ensure that each person in scope is associated with only one dwelling, and hence has only one chance of selection in the survey. Refer to [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#) for more detail.

Data from the WRTAL survey is available by State, Greater Capital City Statistical Area, Section of State, Remoteness area and Statistical Area Level 4, subject to confidentiality constraints. Geography has been classified according to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), July 2016. For a list of these publications refer to the [ABS Geography Publications \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/ABS+Geography+Publications\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/ABS+Geography+Publications) page.

Sample size

Information was collected from 21,693 fully responding persons. This includes:

- 534 proxy interviews for people aged 15 to 17 years, where permission was not given by a parent or guardian for a personal interview
- 1,555 proxy interviews for people aged 18 years and over who were not capable of answering for themselves due to illness, injury or language reasons.

Collection method

The survey is one of a number of small, self-contained topics on the MPHS.

Each month, one eighth of the dwellings in the LFS sample were rotated out of the survey and selected for the MPHS. After the LFS had been fully completed for each person in scope and coverage, a usual resident aged 15 years or over was selected at random (based on a computer algorithm) and asked the additional MPHS questions in a personal interview.

In the MPHS, a proxy interview may be conducted on behalf of the selected person when:

- they were aged 15 to 17 years and their parent or guardian did not provide permission for them to be interviewed
- they were aged 18 years and over and unable to answer for themselves due to illness, injury or language reasons.

Data were collected using Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI), whereby responses were recorded directly onto an electronic questionnaire in a notebook computer, with interviews conducted over the telephone.

Work-related training and adult learning questionnaire

[Download XLSX](#)

[223.01 KB]

[\(/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25/WRTAL%202024_25%20Questionnaire.xlsx\)](#)

Processing the data

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Estimation methods

Survey estimates of counts of persons are obtained by summing the weights of persons with the characteristic of interest.

Weighting

Weighting is the process of adjusting results from a sample survey to infer results for the total 'in-scope' population. To do this, a 'weight' is allocated to each enumerated person. The weight is a value which indicates the number of persons in the population represented by the sample person.

The first step in calculating weights for each unit is to assign an initial weight, which is the inverse of the probability of being selected in the survey. For example, if the probability of a person being selected in the survey was 1 in 600, then the person would have an initial weight of 600 (that is, they represent 600 people).

Benchmarks

The initial weights were calibrated to align with independent estimates of the population of interest, referred to as 'benchmarks'. Weights calibrated against population benchmarks ensure that the survey estimates conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population rather than the distribution within the sample itself. Calibration to population benchmarks helps to compensate for over- or under-enumeration of particular categories of persons or households which may occur due to either the random nature of sampling or non-response.

The survey was benchmarked to the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) aged 15–74 years living in private dwellings in each state and territory at December 2024. People living in very remote areas of Australia or Indigenous communities were excluded. These benchmarks are based on the 2021 Census.

While LFS benchmarks are revised every 5 years, to take into account the outcome of the 5-yearly rebasing of the ERP following the latest Census, the supplementary surveys and MPHS (from which the statistics in this publication are taken) are not. Small differences will therefore exist between the civilian population aged 15–74 years reflected in the LFS and other labour household surveys estimates, as well as over time. If comparisons are being made over time then proportions should be used rather than estimates of persons.

Reliability of the estimates

The estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample survey. Any data collection may encounter factors, known as non-sampling error, which can impact on the reliability of the resulting statistics. In addition, the reliability of estimates based on sample surveys are also subject to sampling variability. That is, the estimates may differ from those that would have been produced had all persons in the population been included in the survey. This is known as sampling error.

Non-sampling error

Non-sampling error is caused by factors other than those related to sample selection. It is any factor that results in the data values not accurately reflecting the true value of the population.

It can occur at any stage throughout the survey process. Examples include:

- selected people that do not respond (such as refusals or non-contact)
- questions being misunderstood
- responses being incorrectly recorded
- errors in coding or processing the survey data.

Sampling error

Sampling error is the expected difference that can occur between the published estimates and the value that would

have been produced if the whole population had been surveyed. Sampling error is the result of random variation and can be estimated using measures of variance in the data.

Standard error

One measure of sampling error is the standard error (SE). There are about two chances in three that an estimate will differ by less than one SE from the figure that would have been obtained if the whole population had been included. There are about 19 chances in 20 that an estimate will differ by less than two SEs.

Measures of error in this publication

This publication reports the relative standard error (RSE) for estimates of counts ('000) and the margin of error (MOE) for estimates of proportions (%).

Relative standard error

The relative standard error (RSE) is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate.

$$RSE\% = \left(\frac{SE}{estimate} \right) \times 100$$

Only estimates with RSEs less than 25% are considered reliable for most purposes. Estimates with larger RSEs, between 25% and less than 50% have been included in the publication, but are flagged to indicate that they should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs of 50% or more have also been flagged and are considered unreliable for most purposes. RSEs for these estimates are not published.

Margin of error

The margin of error (MOE) shows the largest possible distance (due to sampling error) that could exist between the estimate and what would have been produced had all people been included in the survey, at a given level of confidence. It is useful for understanding and comparing the accuracy of proportion estimates. Confidence levels can vary (for example, typically 90%, 95% or 99%), but in this publication all MOEs are provided for estimates at the 95% confidence level. At this level, there are 19 chances in 20 that the estimate will differ from the population value by less than the provided MOE.

The 95% confidence level MOE is obtained by multiplying the standard error by 1.96.

$$MOE = SE \times 1.96$$

The RSE can also be used to directly calculate a 95% MOE by:

$$MOE = \frac{RSE\% \times estimate \times 1.96}{100}$$

These can be converted to a 90% confidence level by multiplying the MOE by:

$$\frac{1.645}{1.96}$$

or to a 99% confidence level by multiplying the MOE by:

$$\frac{2.576}{1.96}$$

Depending on how the estimate is to be used, an MOE greater than 10% may be considered too large to inform decisions. For example, a proportion of 15% with an MOE of plus or minus 11% would mean the proportion could be anything from 4% to 26%. It is important to consider this range when using the estimates to make assertions about the population.

Confidence Intervals

The estimate combined with the MOE defines a range, known as a confidence interval. This range is likely to include

the true population value with a given level of confidence. A confidence interval is calculated by taking the estimate plus or minus the MOE of that estimate. It is important to consider this range when using the estimates to make assertions about the population or to inform decisions. Because MOEs in this publication are provided at the 95% confidence level, a 95% confidence interval can be calculated around the estimate, as follows:

$$95\% \text{ Confidence Interval} = (\text{estimate} - MOE, \text{estimate} + MOE)$$

Calculating measures of error

Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when the numerator (x) is a subset of the denominator (y):

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) \approx \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

When calculating measures of error, it may be useful to convert RSE or MOE to SE. This allows the use of standard formulas involving the SE. The SE can be obtained from RSE or MOE using the following formulas:

$$SE(y) = \frac{RSE(y) \times y}{100}$$

$$SE = \frac{MOE}{1.96}$$

Calculating differences

The difference between two survey estimates (counts or percentages) can also be calculated from published estimates. Such an estimate is also subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x - y) \approx \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or subpopulations, it provides a good approximation for the differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

Significance testing

When comparing estimates between surveys or between populations within a survey, it is useful to determine whether apparent differences are 'real' differences or simply the product of differences between the survey samples.

One way to examine this is to determine whether the difference between the estimates is statistically significant. This is done by calculating the standard error of the difference between two estimates (x and y) and using that to calculate the test statistic using the formula below:

$$\left(\frac{|x-y|}{SE(x-y)} \right)$$

where:

$$SE(y) = \frac{RSE(y) \times y}{100}$$

If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96 we can say there is good evidence of a statistically significant difference at 95% confidence levels between the two populations with respect to that characteristic. Otherwise, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is a real difference between the populations.

Comparing the data

Comparability of time series

When comparing data from different cycles of the survey, users are advised to consult the questionnaires (refer to the Collection method section under [Data collection \(/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25#data-collection\)](#)), check whether question wording or sequencing has changed, and consider whether this may have had an impact on the way questions were answered by respondents.

In 2024–25:

- Persons resident in very remote areas of Australia were no longer included in the survey. Users should exercise caution when interpreting Remoteness data across survey cycles.
- A minor improvement to coding level and field of education was introduced. Caution should be used when making comparisons with previous years, particularly where the field of education is within the broad fields of 'Education' or 'Society and Culture'.
- Data regarding personal interest learning was no longer collected. Because this data was previously combined with work-related training to form non-formal learning in earlier WRTAL surveys, that shared category has been discontinued. Data regarding work-related training continues to be collected.
- Questions regarding who delivered the work-related training and the size of the business where the respondent was employed were no longer asked.
- Additional questions were asked to capture childcare-related barriers to work-related training and formal study.

In 2020–21:

- An additional module collecting barriers to formal study was introduced.
- The survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. This likely impacted some topics covered in the survey, such as the availability and delivery of various types of training and learning, and changes to working patterns and arrangements (for example, working from home).

The WRTAL survey was first conducted in April 2013 as a supplement to the monthly LFS. Subsequent iterations of the WRTAL survey (2016–17, 2020–21, and 2024–25) were conducted as part of the MPHS. Both survey vehicles use similar collection methodologies, that is, both were primarily personal telephone interviews, conducted after the LFS, with one randomly selected person from the household.

The key difference is that the 2013 WRTAL survey collected data during a one month period, whereas subsequent WRTAL surveys collected data over a 12 month period. Consequently, while the 2013 WRTAL survey reference period '...in the last 12 months' relates to learning undertaken in the 12 month period (May 2012 to April 2013), in subsequent surveys, '...in the last 12 months' depends on which month the respondent was interviewed. For example, if a person was interviewed in July 2024, '...in the last 12 months' would refer to the period August 2023 to July 2024.

Comparability to monthly LFS statistics

Since the survey is conducted as a supplement to the LFS, data items collected in the LFS are also available in this publication. However, there are some important differences between the two surveys. The scope of the WRTAL survey and the LFS differ (refer to the Scope section under [Data collection \(/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25#data-collection\)](#)). Due to the differences between the samples, data from this survey and the LFS are weighted separately. Differences may therefore be found in the estimates for those data items collected in the LFS and published as part of the WRTAL survey.

Comparability with other ABS surveys

Estimates from the WRTAL survey may differ from the estimates for the same or similar data items produced from other ABS collections for several reasons. For example, all sample surveys are subject to different sampling errors so

users should take account of the relative standard errors (RSEs) and margins of error (MOEs) on estimates where comparisons are made. Differences may also exist in scope and/or coverage, reference periods reflecting seasonal variations, non-seasonal events that may have impacted on one period but not another, or because of underlying trends in the phenomena being measured.

The survey of [Education and Work, Australia \(/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/latest-releases\)](#) (SEW) has some similarities with the WRTAL survey. The SEW provides a range of indicators about educational participation and attainment, and data on people's transition between education and work. Comparison of SEW and WRTAL data should be undertaken with caution due to different collection methodologies, scope and sample size. SEW is based on a household interview with any responsible adult who responds on behalf of all persons aged 15–74 years in the household. Whereas WRTAL is conducted as a personal interview with one randomly selected person aged 15–74 years in the household or in limited cases as a proxy interview.

Data release

Data cubes/spreadsheets

Data cubes containing all tables for this release in Excel spreadsheet format are available from the [Data downloads \(/statistics/people/education/work-related-training-and-adult-learning/2024-25#data-download\)](#) section of the main publication. The spreadsheets present tables of estimates and proportions, and their corresponding relative standard errors (RSEs) and margins of error (MOEs).

As well as the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may be able to provide other relevant data on request. Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, tables can be tailored to individual requirements for a fee. A list of data items from this survey is available from the [Data downloads \(/statistics/people/education/work-related-training-and-adult-learning/2024-25#data-download\)](#) section. For inquiries about these and related statistics, contact the Customer Assistance Service via the ABS website [Contact us \(https://www.abs.gov.au/about/contact-us\)](#) page.

TableBuilder

TableBuilder can be used by approved users to produce customised tables and analysis. The microdata is released through the TableBuilder product (refer to [Microdata: Work-Related Training and Adult Learning, Australia \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-australia\)](#) for more detail). Microdata products are designed to ensure the integrity of the data whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents to the survey.

Confidentiality

To minimise the risk of identifying individuals in aggregate statistics, a technique is used to randomly adjust cell values. This technique is called perturbation. Perturbation involves a small random adjustment of the statistics and is considered the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of identifiable statistics while maximising the range of information that can be released. These adjustments have a negligible impact on the underlying pattern of the statistics. After perturbation, a given published cell value will be consistent across all tables. However, adding up cell values to derive a total will not necessarily give the same result as published totals. The introduction of perturbation in publications ensures that these statistics are consistent with statistics released via services such as TableBuilder.

Glossary

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Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. The AQF was first introduced in 1995 to underpin the national system of qualifications in Australia encompassing higher education, vocational education and training and schools.

Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)

Education data are coded to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education, 2001 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0). The ASCED is a national standard classification which can be applied to all sectors of the Australian education system, including schools, vocational education and training, and higher education. It includes 'Level of education' and 'Field of education'.

Completed a qualification

A person having 'completed' a qualification means they have successfully passed all of the requirements for the qualification and excludes people who have stopped studying without gaining the qualification.

Contact activities

Contact activities include direct contact with a teacher, lecturer or presenter.

Country of birth

Country of birth has been classified according to the [Standard Australian Classification of Countries \(SACC\), 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/standard-australian-classification-countries-sacc/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/standard-australian-classification-countries-sacc/latest-release). 'Born in Australia' refers to all persons born in Australia or any of its external territories. 'Born overseas' refers to all persons not 'born in Australia', including those born at sea and persons whose country of birth is unknown.

Current main job

The job which a person was employed in during the survey reference week. In cases where the person was employed in more than one job, the current main job refers to the job in which the person usually works the most hours. However, a person may have undertaken their most recent work-related training in a previous job. Therefore several tables presented in this release relating to work-related training are presented only for people who have undertaken training as part of their current main job.

Employed

All people aged 15 years and over who met one of the following criteria during the reference week:

- Worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (employees and owner managers of incorporated or unincorporated enterprises).
- Worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (contributing family workers).
- Were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
 - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement
 - on strike or locked out
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job.
- Were owner managers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Employed full-time

Employed people who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

Employed part-time

Employed people who usually worked less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week.

Employee

An employee works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, on a commission basis (with or without a retainer), tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind.

Engagement

The term engagement is used when assessing a persons level of participation in employment and education. People can be 'Fully engaged', 'Partially engaged', or 'Not engaged'.

Employment status	Education status		
	Full-time study	Part-time study	Not studying
Full-time employment	Fully engaged	Fully engaged	Fully engaged
Part-time employment	Fully engaged	Fully engaged	Partially engaged
Unemployed looking for full-time work	Fully engaged	Partially engaged	Not engaged
Unemployed looking for part-time work	Fully engaged	Partially engaged	Not engaged
Not in the labour force	Fully engaged	Partially engaged	Not engaged

External training provider

For the purpose of this survey an external training provider is defined as a person or organisation who delivers work-related training and is not classified as either an existing staff member or a consultant hired by the organisation to deliver the training.

Face-to-face

Training delivered by the instructor in person to an individual or part of a group.

Field of education

Refers to the subject matter of an educational activity. Fields of education are related to each other through the similarity of subject matter, through the broad purpose for which the education is undertaken, and through the theoretical content which underpins the subject matter. There are 12 broad fields, 71 narrow fields and 356 detailed fields of education. Where a qualification covered multiple fields (for example, a double degree) the 'Main Field of Education ' is the field considered the most important for the survey respondent.

Field of highest educational attainment

The subject matter of the educational activity for the highest achievement a person has attained in any area of formal study. Where a qualification covered multiple fields (for example, a double degree) the 'main field of highest educational attainment' is the field considered the most important for the survey respondent.

Formal study

Formal study activities lead to a qualification recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) such as a Degree, Diploma or Certificate and also includes study at school. Formal study is provided in the systems of schools, colleges, universities and other institutions or organisations and is usually associated with a providing body responsible for determining the teaching method and/or curriculum, admission requirements. In this survey, if the

respondent was still attending school their level of study was recorded as their current year of schooling.

Greater capital city

Refers to Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA) as defined by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). The GCCSAs represent the socio-economic extent of each of the eight State and Territory capital cities. The whole of the Australian Capital Territory is included in the GCCSA. Refer to [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1270.0.55.001~July%202016~Main%20Features~Overview~1#glossary) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1270.0.55.001~July%202016~Main%20Features~Overview~1#glossary>).

Has disability or restrictive condition

Any respondent who reported that they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

Income

Income consists of all current receipts, that are received by the household or by individual members of the household, and which are available for, or intended to support, current consumption.

Income includes receipts from:

- wages and salaries and other receipts from employment (whether from an employer or own incorporated enterprise), including income provided as part of salary sacrificed and/or salary package arrangements
- profit/loss from own unincorporated business (including partnerships)
- net investment income (interest, rent, dividends, royalties)
- government pensions and allowances
- private transfers (for example, superannuation, workers' compensation, income from annuities, child support, and financial support received from family members not living in the same household).

Gross income is the sum of the income from all these sources before income tax, the Medicare levy and the Medicare levy surcharge are deducted.

Industry

Industry data is classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\), 2006](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0>).

Informal learning

Refers to learning that occurs away from a structured, formal classroom environment. It comes in many forms, including viewing videos, self-study, reading articles, participating in forums and chat rooms, performance support, coaching sessions and games. Informal learning is a style of learning in which the learner sets their own goals and objectives. This type of learning is not in scope of this survey.

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

The ISCED was developed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators within and between countries. In 2011, the second major revision of this classification was officially adopted by the UNESCO General Conference and takes into account significant changes in education systems worldwide since the previous ISCED revision in 1997. Education data were categorised from ASCED 2001 to ISCED 2011 using a concordance method. For more information, refer to '[International Standard Classification of Education 2011 \(ISCED\) 2011 to Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\) Concordance](https://www.tcsisupport.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/isce-d-ascend-concordance.pdf) ([tcsisupport.gov.au](https://www.tcsisupport.gov.au))' (<https://www.tcsisupport.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/isce-d-ascend-concordance.pdf>), Tertiary Collection of Student Information.

Level of education

A function of the quality and quantity of learning involved in an educational activity. There are nine broad levels, 15 narrow levels and 64 detailed levels of education.

Level of highest educational attainment

Level of highest educational attainment identifies the highest achievement a person has attained in any area of formal study. It is not a measurement of the relative importance of different fields of study, but a ranking of qualifications and other educational attainments regardless of the particular area of study or the type of institution in which the study was undertaken. The derivation process determines which of the 'school' or 'non-school' attainments will be regarded as the highest. Usually the higher ranking attainment is self-evident, but in some cases some secondary education is regarded, for the purposes of obtaining a single measure, as higher than some certificate level attainments.

There are two types of measures used to determine level of highest educational attainment: 'Non-School Priority' and 'Standard Education Priority'.

- 'Non-School Priority' is where all non-school qualifications are considered of higher ranking than secondary education. For example, a person whose highest year of school completed was Year 12, and whose level of highest non-school qualification was a Certificate I, would have their level of highest education attainment output as Certificate I.
- 'Standard Education Priority' is where some school qualifications are ranked higher than some non-school qualifications. For example, years 10, 11 and 12 are ranked higher than Certificates I, II and n.f.d. The Standard Education Priority was designed for the purpose of obtaining a single value for level of highest educational attainment and is not intended to convey any other hierarchy.

The following decision table shows which responses to 'highest year of school completed' and 'level of highest non-school qualification' are regarded as the highest. For example, a person's level of highest educational attainment if they completed Year 12 and a Certificate III would be 'Certificate III'. However, if the same person answered 'certificate' to the highest non-school qualification question, their level of highest educational attainment would be output as 'Level not determined'. In addition, for persons who never attended school and do not have a non-school qualification the output is 'No educational attainment'.

Decision table - Level of Highest Educational Attainment

Highest year of school completed	Level of highest non-school qualification								
	Cert I V	Cert II I	Cert II I & IV n.f.d.	Cert II	Cert I	Cert I & II n.f.d.	Cert n.f.d.	Inade quately desc ribed L.n.d	Not St ated
Year 12	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	Year 12	Year 12	Year 12	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Year 11	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	Year 11	Year 11	Year 11	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Senior Sec. Education n.f.d	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	Senior Sec. n.f.d.	Senior Sec. n.f.d.	Senior Sec. n.f.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Year 10	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	Year 10	Year 10	Year 10	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Year 9 and below	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	Cert II	Cert I	Cert I & II n.f.d.	Cert n.f.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Sec. Education n.f.d	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Junior Sec. Education n.f.d	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.
Not stated	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Never attended school	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert III & IV n.f.d.	Cert II	Cert I	Cert I & II n.f.d.	Cert n.f.d.	L.n.d.	N.S.

Cert = Certificate

L.n.d = Level not determined

n.f.d = not further defined

N.S. = Not Stated

Sec. = Secondary

For ease of interpretability, the layout of this table has been modified from [Education Variables, June 2014 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1246.0main+features24june%202014\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1246.0main+features24june%202014), however the ranking of different levels of attainment has not changed.

Level of highest non-school qualification

A person's level of highest non-school qualification is the highest qualification a person has attained in any area of formal study other than school study. It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) Level of education classification.

Non-contact activities

Activities that do not involve contact with a teacher or instructor, for example undertaking research or completing assignments.

Non-school qualification

Non-school qualifications are awarded for educational attainments other than those of pre-primary, primary or secondary education. They include qualifications at the Postgraduate Degree level, Master Degree level, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate level, Bachelor Degree level, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level, and Certificates I, II, III and IV levels. School level qualifications obtained through institutions other than primary and secondary schools (such as TAFE) are not included. Non-school qualifications may be attained concurrently with school study.

Not in labour force

People who were not in the categories 'employed' or 'unemployed' during the reference week.

Occupation

An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their title and tasks, skill level and skill specialisation. Occupation data is classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations \(ANZSCO\), 2013, Version 1.2 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1220.0Main+Feature_s12013,%20Version%201.2?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1220.0Main+Feature_s12013,%20Version%201.2?OpenDocument).

Online or virtually

Method for delivering work-related training, including:

- training delivered or accessed remotely (for example, via the internet or intranet)
- live or recorded lectures, webinars, YouTube or LinkedIn videos
- virtual classrooms, e-learning modules or interactive quizzes.

Own business

Refers to people who work in their own incorporated or unincorporated business with or without employees. Own business also includes contractors and subcontractors, and people contributing to a family business.

Part-time study

Refers to study load that is not considered full-time by the institution.

Personal costs

Includes any cost related to the course which were paid for by the participant and not reimbursed by a third party, for example course fees or costs for study materials.

Qualification

Formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved an appropriate level of learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs. Statements of attainment awarded for partial completion of a course of study at a particular level are excluded.

Reference week

The week preceding the week in which the interview was conducted.

Remoteness

The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) was used to define remoteness. The Remoteness Structure is described in detail in the publication [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 5 - Remoteness Structure, July 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/D964E42C5DF5B6D4CA257B03000D7ECB?opendocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/D964E42C5DF5B6D4CA257B03000D7ECB?opendocument).

Rest of state/territory

Comprises the remainder of each state/territory not included in a Capital City. Refer to [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1270.0.55.001~July%202016~Main%20Features~Statistica%20Area%20Level%201%20\(SA1\)~10013#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1270.0.55.001~July%202016~Main%20Features~Statistica%20Area%20Level%201%20(SA1)~10013#glossary).

School study

School study is participation in primary or secondary level education, regardless of the institution or location where the study is or was undertaken. It therefore includes such study undertaken in a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) or other institution. For the purpose of this release school study is classified as participation in formal study.

Skill level

A function of the range and complexity of the set of tasks involved in an occupation. The greater the range and complexity of the set of tasks, the greater the skill level of the occupation. For more information, refer to the [Occupation Standard, 2018 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/occupation-standard/2018\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/occupation-standard/2018).

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is an ABS product that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The SEIFA indexes used in this publication were created from Census 2016 data. Each index is a summary of a different subset of Census variables and focuses on a different aspect of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Each index ranks geographic areas across Australia in terms of their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. It is therefore likely that the same area will have a different ranking on each index.

The four indexes in SEIFA 2016 are:

- Index of Education and Occupation (IEO)
- Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)
- Index of Economic Resources (IER)
- Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)

For more information, refer to [Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\), Australia, 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Main%20Features~SOCIO-ECONOMIC%20INDEXES%20FOR%20AREAS%20\(SEIFA\)%202016~1\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Main%20Features~SOCIO-ECONOMIC%20INDEXES%20FOR%20AREAS%20(SEIFA)%202016~1).

Underemployed

Employed people aged 15 years and over who want, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have. They comprise:

- people employed part-time who want to work more hours and are available to start work with more hours, either in the reference week or in the four weeks subsequent to the survey
- people employed full-time who worked part-time hours in the reference week for economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work being available). It is assumed that these people wanted to work full-time in the reference week and would have been available to do so.

Unemployed

People aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Year 12 or equivalent

'Year 12 or equivalent' includes overseas qualifications comparable to the Australian Year 12 level of schooling as well as other terms used to describe the final year of schooling in Australia, for example, 'Year 13', '6th Form', 'high school certificate' and 'matriculation'.

Working hours

Refers to the time when a person would usually be working.

Work-related training

Non-formal learning undertaken to obtain, maintain or improve employment related skills and/or to improve employment opportunities. Work-related training courses have a structured format but do not lead to a qualification.

Abbreviations

Show all



Abbreviation	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASCED	Australian Standard Classification of Education
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
CAI	Computer Assisted Interviewing
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
GCCSA	Greater Capital City Statistical Areas
IEO	Index of Education and Occupation
IER	Index of Economic Resources
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MOE	Margin of Error
MPHS	Multipurpose Household Survey
MPS	Monthly Population Survey
n.f.d.	not further defined
NSQ	non-school qualification
RSE	Relative Standard Error
SA1	Statistical Area Level 1
SA4	Statistical Area Level 4
SACC	Standard Australian Classification of Countries
SE	Standard Error
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SEW	Survey of Education and Work
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WRTAL	Work-Related Training and Adult Learning